

Facsimile Edition of
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THE TESTIMONY OF SIXTY

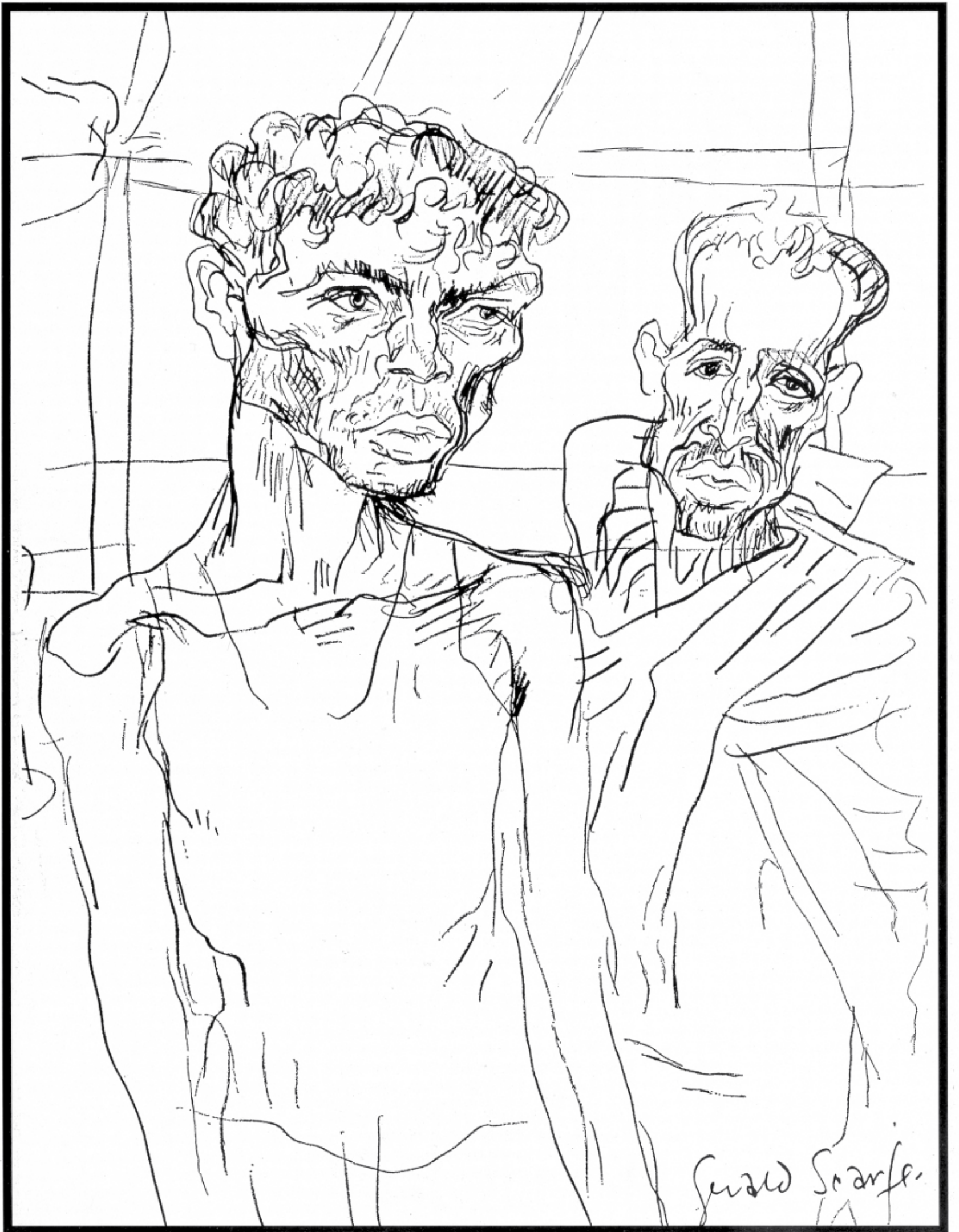
on the crisis in Bengal

SIXTY men and women have been to, seen and lived in a situation which has been referred to as 'defying description'. This is their attempt to describe it. It is their record, their voice, their testimony of a tragedy.

Senator Edward Kennedy and Mother Teresa are known to the world. Others are international journalists testifying specially for this document: Michael Brunson (ITN), Clare Hollingworth (Daily Telegraph), Claude Mosse (Radio Suisse), Frederick Nossall (Toronto Telegram), John Pilger (Daily Mirror), Nicolas Tomalin (Sunday Times). Yet others are experienced relief workers from British, European, North American and Indian organizations. All have freely and generously given their time and their energy.

They are eye-witnesses, and the story they tell is horrifying. It is a story of millions hounded, homeless and dying. It is, too, a story of the world community engaged in a communal ostrich act.

Perhaps it is that the world does not know. Then let the facts speak. Perhaps it is that we just cannot comprehend the extent of the disaster. A population the size of Sweden and New Zealand together have already fled from their homeland. Millions more who remain now face famine. It does not bear thinking about. But we must. If a small girl can write to Oxfam and



BRIEF BACKGROUND TO THE CRISIS
At Independence, in 1947, 'British India' was divided into four parts : India, Burma, and East and West Pakistan; the latter united as one country by Mohammedanism but separated by a thousand miles, a different language and even a different script. It is as though Greece and Britain were one country, united by Christianity.

For many years, the conflicting regionalism within Pakistan—the Bengalis in the East, the Pathans, the Punjabis, the Baluchis in the West—were held together by a tough military dictatorship. Power was held in few hands. 22 families owned over half the industrial wealth of the country.

For some years, the East has been getting a rough economic deal. In 1968 55% of exports came from the East: yet 70% of imports went of the West. Jute, providing 40% of the country's exports, comes almost entirely from the East. In the third five-year plan (1966-70), 52% of the finance was allocated to the East: only 36% was spent there.

In March 1969 Ayub Khan resigned and was succeeded by General Yahya Khan, who was determined to hand over to civilian rule. Poignantly, it was the first steps to democracy—the general election of December 1970—which started the crisis. In this election, Seikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of the East Pakistan based Awami League, gained 167 out of the 169 seats in the Eastern Assembly and thereby control of the 313 seats in the National Assembly. His programme stopped only just short of secession for the East.

In the West, Z.A. Bhutto of the People's Party won, and he boycotted the first meeting of the National Assembly, arranged for 3rd March 1971. Yahya Khan postponed the Assembly indefinitely. Murder and looting broke out in Dacca together with calls for independence for the East.

On march 25th, West Pakistani troops brought into the East struck to control Dacca and Chittagong, in anticipation of a Bengali munity. A bloodbath followed, of hideous proportions. Women and children were machine-gunned and raped. The Bengalis killed non-Bengalis. By early May hordes of refugees, 65% of them Hindu, were pouring across the borders of India, mute testimony to the massacres behind them.

By mid June, 5 million had gathered : the largest exodus of people since the SS stalked Europe. The Indian Government set up camps to feed them, but there was a desperate lack of sanitation, shelter and fresh water. Cholera broke out. Then the monsoon came. And all the time more refugees, until the numbers reached their present level of nine million : and still they come, 15-40,000 a day.

A CALL FOR ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN BY POPE PAUL

"Millions of human beings are in conditions of extreme want. One disaster after another has struck those people who are extremely poor. There is no lack of news and the facts are frightening, revealing a disturbing disparity between the help required and the means actually available. To save innumerable lives people must awake to the need. Public and private aid, including our own contribution, is being offered but it is not nearly enough. It is not too much to hope that the world will be touched by the plight of these people and send the things that are essential: food, clothing, medicine and money."

THE MONEY NEEDED

The refugee programme is the biggest that has ever been mounted this century. The programme is currently running at \$350 million for six months—over \$1 million a day.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees called for funds to meet India's burden : so far only \$114 million has been pledged, \$70 million of which has been contributed by one country : America.

The British Government's contribution has been \$8 million to India and \$1 million to Pakistan. In addition to this, British charities have spent another \$1 million on their own programmes.

To get some kind of scale to the sum Leslie Kirkley asks of the British Government, two facts should be borne in mind.

1. International aid to Pakistan from 1950 to 1969 amounted to an astronomical \$6,033 million : or over \$300 million a year. Since the present crisis, new aid to Pakistan has been postponed by the major donor countries—with considerable savings to the British Government (last year, Britain's aid to Pakistan was \$9½ million)

2. President Nixon is currently asking Congress for an *additional* \$250 million.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Oxfam thanks those who made *The Testimony of Sixty* possible. The contributors make their testimony in their own words, photographs or sketches. Their views do not necessarily coincide with those of Oxfam; nor are they bound by their statements to Oxfam's policy. We thank Clare Hollingworth, Nicholas Tomalin and Martin Woollacott who gave their time for the main articles; the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Guardian* who released them; Romagnò Cagnoni, Alan Leather and Donald McCullin for their photographs, Dennis O'Dair of the *Observer* for his design: all the eyewitnesses for the trouble and expense they took to get their statements in on time for the publication; Finally to Gerald Scarfe, whom we rang for an eyewitness statement, but said "I'm not a man of words" and gave these drawings.

KENNEDY: MOSAIC OF MISERY

This stark tragedy is not yet understood by the world. I can tell you that not until you see it firsthand can you begin to understand its immensity. For only by being there can you sense the feelings and understand the plight of the people, and the forces of violence which continue to create refugee and increase the toll of civilian casualties. In India I visited refugee areas along the entire border of East Bengal—from Calcutta and West Bengal in the west—to the Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts in the north—to Agartala in the State of Tripura in the east. I listened to scores of refugees as they crowded into camps, struggling to survive in makeshift shelters in open fields or behind public buildings—or trudging down the roads of West Bengal from days and even weeks of desperate flight. Their faces and their stories etch a saga of shame which should overwhelm the moral sensitivities of people throughout the world. I found that conditions varied widely from one refugee camp to another. But many defy description. Those refugees who suffer most from the congestion, the lack of adequate supplies and the frightful conditions of sanitation are the very young—the children under five—and the very old. The estimates of their numbers run as high as fifty percent of all the refugees. Many of these infants and aged already have died. And it is possible—as you pick your steps among others—to identify those who will be dead within hours, or whose sufferings surely will end in a matter of days.

You see infants with their skin hanging loosely in folds from their tiny bones—lacking the strength even to lift their heads. You see children with legs and feet swollen with oedema and malnutrition, limp in the arms of their mothers. You see babies going blind for lack of vitamins, or covered with sores that will not heal. You see in the eyes of their parents the despair of ever having their children well again. And, most difficult of all, you see the corpse of the child who died just the night before.

The story is the same in camp after camp. And it is complicated by the continually growing number of civilian casualties overburdening an already limited hospital system. Most of these casualties have been brought across the border by their fellow refugees. Yet there are also large numbers of Indians whose border villages have been subjected to shelling from Pakistani troops. In addition, there are the untold numbers of victims who remain uncounted and unattended in the rural areas of East Bengal.

The government of India, as it first saw this tide of human misery begin to flow across its borders, could have cordoned off its land and refused entry. But, to its everlasting credit, India chose the way of compassion. The Indian Government has made Herculean efforts to assist and accommodate the refugees—efforts which history will record and remember. And while the magnitude of the problem staggers the imagination, the individual accounts of the people who have fled East Bengal tear at your heart.

A 55-year-old railway employee—he was a Muslim civil servant with 35 years of service—told me of an unexplained noontime attack by the Pakistani army on his railroad station. “I do not know why they shot me,” he said. “I don’t belong to any political party. I was just a railway clerk.” Now he sits idly in an Indian refugee camp, financially crippled, and with no prospect of returning to receive his long-earned government pension that was to begin next month.

Even more tragic are the experiences of the innocent and uneducated villagers. You can piece together the mosaic of misery from dozens of interviews among new refugees on the Boyra-Bongaon Road north of Calcutta.

On the day we traveled this 20-mile road, at least 7000 new refugees were streaming along the banks of the border river crossing near Boyra. Nearly all were peasant farmers. Most were Hindus, from the Khulna and Barisal districts south of Dacca—on the fringe of the area affected by last fall’s cyclone.

The very young and very old were exhausted from many days and nights in flight—usually on foot. Many were in a visible state of shock, sitting aimlessly by the roadside or wandering aimlessly toward an unknown fate. They told stories of atrocities, of slaughter, of looting and burning, of harassment and abuse by West Pakistani soldiers and collaborators. Many children were dying along the way, their parents pleading and begging for help. Monsoon rains were drenching the countryside, adding to the depression and despair on their faces. To those of us who went out that day, the rains meant no more than a change of clothes, but to these people it meant still another night without rest, food, or shelter.

It is difficult to erase from your mind the look on the face of a child paralyzed from the waist down, never to walk again; or a child quivering in fear on a mat in a small tent still in shock from seeing his parents, his brothers and his sisters executed before his eyes; or the anxiety of a 10-year-old girl out forging for something to cover the body of her baby brother who had died of cholera a few moments before our arrival. When I asked one refugee camp director what he would describe as his greatest need, his answer was “a crematorium”. He was in charge of one of the largest refugee camps in the world. It was originally designed to provide low income and middle income housing, and has now become the home for 170,000 refugees.

The tragedy of East Bengal is not only a tragedy for Pakistan. It is not only a tragedy for India. It is a tragedy for the entire world community, and it is the responsibility of that community to act together to ease the crisis.

Simple humanity demands that America and the United Nations must accept the truth that this heavy burden should be borne by the entire international community, and not by India alone.

SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY
*pleads that the entire world community
accept the burden*

say "We decided to help. We raised altogether £56.15. We are all about 9½," then surely to God world governments can think in the terms necessary. In the name of the hundreds of thousands who have given and will go on giving through Oxfam and similar agencies throughout the world, I put forward the following appeal with all my heart:

OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT I ask for an immediate new sum of £25 million for refugee relief. Britain had covered about one month's refugee costs. It is the least we can do as a nation.

OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY I ask that the United Nations General Assembly, now meeting, should immediately appoint a special executive group of five, under the personal chairmanship of the Secretary-General, with authority to ensure the urgent funding and implementation of the relief programmes for India and East Pakistan. I further plead that every Government freely contributes all appropriate resources at its disposal to this vital humanitarian operation.

OF THE PAKISTAN AUTHORITIES AND THE MUKTI BAHINI I ask for their full acceptance and encouragement of a comprehensive UN famine relief programme and the creation of conditions genuinely compatible with the return of refugees to their homes.

OF PEOPLE—ORDINARY PEOPLE I ask that they continue to care and give. I ask that they refuse to accept that even one life is dispensable. It is, to me, inconceivable that we should do less.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "H. Leslie Kirkley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and a stylized "K".

H. LESLIE KIRKLEY, C.B.E
DIRECTOR, OXFAM
Oxford, 21 October 1971

“We are trying to make the problem of India the problem of the world.

India has been wonderful in accepting and taking care of the millions of Pakistan refugees and India will continue to take care of them. In opening the door to them, the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, has done a wonderful, a Christ-like thing.

Let us remember this : the people of Pakistan, the people of India, the people of Vietnam, all people wherever they may be, are the children of God, all created by the same hand. Today, the Pakistan people belong especially to us. They are part of the family of God in all the world.

This problem is not only India's problem, it is the world's problem. The burden must be carried by the world, the answer must be given by the world. For us in India, good has come from the problem because our people have made considerable sacrifices and will continue to make them.

But the entire world must, I repeat must become concerned. Let us all, wherever we are, realize that we have millions of children suffering from malnutrition and starvation, and there are other difficulties, the enormity of which people find it hard to appreciate. Here again, unless the world comes in with food and proteins and those other things the children need just to lead ordinary, healthy lives, these children will die—and the world will have to answer for their death.

I have been working among the refugees for five or six months. I have seen these children, and the adults, dying. That is why I can assure the world how grave the situation is and how urgently it must help.

The appeal is to the world—and the world must answer.”

M. Teresa

MOTHER TERESA is the founder of 'The Missionaries of Charity'. Last year she received the Pope's Prize. She has been working amongst the dying and destitute in Calcutta since 1948. Her Order is one of the few Catholic Orders with no shortage of novitiates. She has 700 nuns and postulants. They live in the slums, sworn to total poverty, eating the same food as the poor.





WHEN THE NEWSMEN CRACK UP

The Pakistan crisis is the worst disaster that has faced the world for the past 30 years. It is also morally the most simple. The villains, those Pakistani generals who ordered a military attack on their own countrymen last March 25th, are more obviously in the wrong than any military aggressors since the Hitler war.

The victims, nine million refugees in India, sixty-five million Bengalis left behind in East Pakistan, are more innocent, more suffering and more numerous than any we can remember. The circumstances combining war, famine, cyclone, gross injustice and apparent apathy on the part of people and governments elsewhere throughout the world, are terrible in a way that clearly exceeds the horror of Vietnam, Biafra, or any of the bloody African conflicts of the past 15 years. All that this huge melodramatic tragedy lacks is a hero and a solution.

As the weeks go by and more people die—some say it is two or three thousand a week—the rest of us who watch it going on find it more and more impossible to know what to do as individuals. We are helpless.

Some of us salve our consciences by sending in cheques to charitable funds, some organize concerts or protest meeting in faraway cities, some campaign for an independent Bangladesh. A few come to India and try to feed or nurse a hundred or so of those nine million.

Relief agencies like Oxfam can lessen the suffering and delay the final catastrophe, but none of them have enough money, people or power to solve the real problem. Only governments, the most powerful ones acting together, can do that. They must take ruthless and skilful political action to force Yahya Khan and his Pakistan Government to admit that their present policy is criminal and stupid and must stop. Then they must force him or his successors to remove virtually all his troops from East Pakistan and guarantee the safety of those refugees who want to return there. Then they must persuade Indira Gandhi and her Indian government to accept and support those refugees who do not want to return. Then they must pay out money, hundreds of millions of pounds of it, to save people from death by starvation, disease and exposure.

If all these things are done quickly there might not be a catastrophe. East Pakistan, in fact Bengal in general, would still be a disaster area. But that is by contrast a happy prospect.

I am writing down these apocalyptic thoughts about a week after going to see some of the refugee camps that have been set up around Calcutta. I am lying on a soft mattress beside the large swimming-pool of the Grand Hotel in the centre of the city, drinking many bottles of cold beer, munching peanuts and occasionally breaking off to read a grubbily printed paper called "I love you" comic, about a boy and girl ski-ing down a hill, while the girl says, "I love Steve, but what will he do when he learns my secret? Can he forget my past?"

I swim a lot, eat strange bitter curries and try

not to be irritated with Bengali liftboys who fuss over me like some parading Maharajah, in the hope of a large tip.

I do all this because it is taking a long time to get unjittery again after seeing what is happening to the refugees. My newspaper colleagues seem the same. I mention this because in all other situations they have always been able to watch the most appalling events and experience unbearable human misery and remain unaffected in themselves.

I have seen them in Vietnam, back from Biafra, or in the Bengal cyclone. They were concerned, not without compassion, but able to cope with their emotions. This time they cannot cope.

One colleague who has had an operation for throat cancer is already back on seventy cigarettes a day. The gathered newspapermen arm themselves with a specially virulent form of cynical self-protection.

Looking at a picture of an emaciated little Bengali girl admiring herself in a fragment of mirror, someone says: "Preparing to be an Oxfam poster", and everyone giggles.

"I got a wonderful picture today," says one photographer. "Two babies dying together in the mud."

"I did better than that," says another, "I got them to hold hands."

Everyone else in Calcutta is equally emotional. A local diplomat, who looks as if he would remain perfectly urbane throughout the second coming, is talking passionately about war. He thinks there will be one between India and Pakistan this November, or if not this November next November. India, he argues, will simply not be able to bear the economic burden of the nine million starving, non-productive new inhabitants.

Already there are riots in Assam where the hill people dislike the Bengalis from the plains, who have fled to their mountains. Already there are continual fights and quarrels, even in the camps around Calcutta. The Indian peasants welcomed their suffering brothers at first. Now, as they see the strangers take their jobs at starvation wages, despoil their fields, and steal their goods and women, the hostilities grow.

Therefore, argues this diplomat, India will very soon be forced into a desperate military offensive against East Pakistan, gambling on clearing out Yahya Khan's troops (with the support of the local Bengalis) within a week. Then she will ship all the refugees back to East Pakistan. Then she will decide whether or not to make East Pakistan a province of India. It has to happen in November because snow blocks the mountain passes and prevents China attacking from the north.

This man has been in India for many years: he loves Bengal and even loves Calcutta. Until this summer he believed that India's terrible problems of recurrent crisis, famine and war were coming to an end with a new strong central government. He thought the country, at last, would begin to be peaceful, united and prosperous. Now this.

"The rest of us who watch it find it more and more impossible to know what to do as individuals". NICHOLAS TOMALIN of The Sunday Times writes an exclusive report on the worsening plight of the refugees in India. ©

"I am more depressed than I can tell you," he says, "I cannot see any way out, I cannot see any solution. Death and ruination everywhere, that's all I can see".

My friend the Indian Army general has bags two inches deep beneath each eye. He seldom sleeps at night. "I don't know if they're going to attack or where or how. I can no longer understand these Pakistani soldiers' minds," he says. "Really, I think they've gone mad. They see the total collapse of their policy in East Pakistan, but it only seems to encourage them in their folly. They suffer from that tragic warrior's blindness: the more terrible, hopeless and unjust their cause, the more noble it seems to them. The more their actions threaten to annihilate everyone, the more they brandish their swords.

"Honestly, I think the Islamabad government is going to make a supreme gesture and go down fighting. If they do that they'll bring down the whole sub-continent with them, not to mention the refugees and our own Bengali people. Then may be China will join in, then Russia, then the Americans and yourselves, then we have a Third World War."

Meanwhile the luxurious swimming-pool has ceased to be the haven it seemed. A soft plopping noise announces the arrival of a dead rat dropped carelessly from the beak of a carrion crow. It stains he tiling round the diving board.

Perhaps what makes all of us around the swimming-pool so neurotic and jittery is the unremittingness of the disasters in this part of the world. They never stop. I do not mean by this the repetitive history of conquest and reconquest, when wave after wave of warriors reduced the once dazzling prosperous area of Bengal to the poorest part of the world, aided by centuries of natural disasters. It was, of course, the East Bengalis' special bad luck that the Moghul emperors decided to forcibly convert them to Mohammedanism when they swept in from Persia and the West. Mohammedanism does not suit excitable and intellectual Bengalis, and had they remained Hindus there would have been no partition riots there, no religious problem in Bengal, and most important of all, no splitting off of the nonsense province of East Pakistan. They would all have been part of India, which is the only geographical arrangement which makes economic sense.

What really hurts is the recent history. Misfortune created poverty which created greater misfortune which could not withstand further natural disasters, exploitation, internal corruption, religious bigotry and political inflammability. In such a hopeless, messy place, how could the disciplined Punjabi rulers of Pakistan create any order and prosperity? How could they stop their brisk merchants from exploiting the place? How could they defy Muslim principles and start a proper birth control programme to reduce the bursting population?

How understandable that East Pakistan became in essence a colony of West Pakistan with racial hostility between the tall brown unemotional

westerners and the small dark excitable talented Easterners. The Punjabis and Biharis thought of Bengalis as little better than poor grubbly monkeys and uncontrollable. And in their own terms the situation seemed to justify that belief.

The Bengalis saw the Western army rulers, merchants, and money lenders as worse than the British imperialists, less benevolent, less understanding of their special sensitiveness and talents for self expression. No wonder that hostilities built up so fiercely that just before the blow-up last March the Bengalis had been demonstrating ferociously and killing Western „Foreigner' in their country. Because they had lived such doomed lives for so long, such atrocities (which have long been a part of violent tradition in the sub-continent) were entirely understandable. And no wonder, finally, that East Pakistan, after a million of its inhabitants were reportedly drowned and killed in the cyclone disaster last year, finally voted almost unanimously for their own Awami League and against Islamabad domination.

What was criminal and stupid in this situation was General Yahya Khan's decision that the simple military solution was the only one possible. He should have known that no military solution could cope with such hostility, that it was not only obviously unjust and illegal to take the action he did, but bound to fail.

In the months that followed the March attack, everything happened that Yahya should have been able to predict. The country grew not less but more hostile. The Bengali guerillas destroyed all communications. And where they failed the Army's counter-attacks succeeded. The food harvesting in this naturally fertile area was largely disrupted. The hostility and killing began to be increasingly religious as well as racial. There were about ten million Hindus living amongst the Moslems in East Pakistan. As soon as it became clear that the Pakistani army was killing Hindus indiscriminately, nearly all of them fled into India. With them came Moslem Bengali Nationalists, Awami League supporters and people who merely wished to escape the fighting. As the fighting and chaos grew, it became self-perpetuating. The army would be attacked by guerillas from over the Indian border and would retaliate against the local population. Then irregular Moslem volunteers were recruited to help the Army hold down the Bengalis, and it is these recruits, or rhazacars, a bunch of Moslem fanatics, hoodlums, time servers, who are now doing most of the killing. It is because of them that the present numbers of refugees are coming across the border, despite the monsoon rains.

When the rains cease the situation will change. The country may settle down as the Army is better able to control the roads and the border. Things may get worse as more people can travel and decide to kill each other. Some Indian authorities predict a new flood of refugees, perhaps another four million. Others predicts that a quarter to a half of the refugees now in India

will drift back into Pakistan.

However, here they now are, these refugees huddled into camps in India with insufficient food, nothing to do, no proper place to live. The spectacle of the typical starving Pakistan refugee is by now familiar to anyone able to read or even just to use his eyes. It forces itself on all of us from the newspapers, television and advertising hoardings.

After such a bombardment, to see them in actuality is in some ways an anticlimax. A sense of occasion interferes with one's compassion. As a long anticipated cathedral or ancient castle is often not up to the evocation photographs, so some of the refugees in the camps near Calcutta seem surprisingly normal.

Some of them are cheerful. A few are almost fat. Some have work to do. Some live better than they did not in their own villages back in East Pakistan. Some. But most do not, millions do not, and as one travels along the roads by the border and sees camp after camp, hundreds of thousands of tents put up beside the road, in trees, on piles of bricks, anywhere possible in the crowded land, it is the numbers of them that are so terrible.

After a while, grown expert in the suffering of such people, it is clear their situation is incomprehensible because it is so terrible. I spent only two days driving round the refugee camps and one night sleeping in a relatively well-organized one. At first, as I have explained, they did not seem to be too badly off along the road which leads to the border at Hasnabad. In a suburb of Calcutta, Salt Lake City, 250,000 lived in a reasonable state. There was food—just sufficient. There were three or four special hospitals set up by foreign relief agencies. There was even some form of policing, thanks to the nearness of Calcutta. But even here it was the children who looked the worst.

It takes some nutritional knowledge to realize how badly they are suffering. A child needs lots of protein if he has trekked several hundreds of miles and now is living, permanently diseased, on food which is different from that he is used to. He needs specially large amounts. But the Indian authorities at present hand out only 400 grams of rice per person, plus some rations of vegetables, cooking oil, cereals. Distribution problems have cut these down to 200 grams per person, in many cases, and children get only half this, 100 grams of rice a day. That's about as much as you could hold in your hand.

According to medical experts—both foreign and Indian—those children will certainly die unless they are given additional protein feeding. Three quarters of them will be dead within nine months. A million children.

Therefore, slowly, laboriously, special feeding centres for children are being set up where they get milk and high protein food called Balahar. As yet most of these feeding centres merely hand the food to the children who return to their families, where by old tradition much of it is taken from them and shared round the elders. The child



ALAN LEATHER

therefore is still likely to die by the time this article is published.

Maybe a million children won't die. They will continue to live, nearly live, without hope or education or function, surrounded by the other seven million, the adults, also with nothing to do and no hope, with only the ferocious rhetoric of Bangla Desh revolutionaries not occupy them and the forlorn hope of reinvading their own country, vanquishing Pakistani tanks, to sustain them.

It is a frightful and dangerous prospect. No wonder everyone is neurotic, jittery, depressed, without solutions.

Add to this, impressionistic moments around the camps. The old woman walking through the flood carrying two buckets of rice, the water up to her shoulders, buckets held just above it. Most of the time tiny clusters of tents, all that is left of some camps, reached by narrow bridges made of bamboo. Whole families permanently covered in mud and their own shit which never finally washes off, having to struggle through the water to feeding centres, cut off from medicine.

There was one camp called Deara, where 30,000 people in their neat tents, all well housed and settled, were overnight submerged in flood water. They lost most of their belongings and all their shelter and gathered on the high ground nearby there. For the third or fourth time they began to try and collect their lives again.

There was the reception centre at Hasnabad Railway station, a nightmare throng of desperate people waiting to be registered for their food ration. The old men and women so exhausted they couldn't move, the young with bulging eyes, white flakey stuff like dandruff on their skin from malnutrition, and every imaginable disease, perhaps from simple tiredness. Dead children,

their teeth unnaturally prominent in shrunken faces. The stronger adults unable to do anything but crouch in their tents, occasionally haggling with local peasants for special food, spending their last few rupees.

These sights are everywhere: one could list them endlessly. What is more important however is to try and imagine what is going to happen now the floods are receding. The worst prospect is political trouble between the refugees and the displaced Indian peasants who are also starving, and winter in Bengal. This doesn't matter too much, it is always warm, but in the North in Sylhet, in Assam, it is already very chilly. In two months it will be snowing, freezing, continual cold.

The Bengali refugees have no clothes, no blankets, few proper tents. Three million blankets are needed immediately for these people, and clothes and tenting to match.

So these nine million refugees have suffered political injustice, then a cyclone, then a war, then displacement, hunger, disease, and all the ills of refugees in a land which cannot afford them, then flood and now they face the prospect of winter.

It is, as I have said, the worst disaster that has struck the world for 30 years. It is also, as I have tried to describe, a catastrophe so terrible one cannot respond to it in proper reasonable terms. The journalists in Calcutta all know, as do Oxfam and other relief workers, that this is too big a problem for us. This is no longer a case for simple compassion or simple charity. After all, the world has already responded charitably. We all poured out money in a surge of pity last May when the reports of a cholera epidemic began, so the world has virtually exhausted its effective pity. Therefore the real charity must be shown in ruthless political action, in sanctions that make it absolutely clear to

the Pakistani Government, which exists only because of international financial and military aid, that it will be worse off if it continues its present policies than if it abandons them. The political moves should be directed at the Army officers who still bolster Yahya Khan.

If they can be persuaded to discard him, use him as a scapegoat for past mistakes, there is a chance of a new policy of reconciliation. That is the first essential action. What happens afterwards is not so clear. There might be an independent Bangla Desh but that would create many problems. There might be a new constitution of Pakistan which allowed the East to be linked federally with the West. Or, ultimately, a new racial state of Bengal might come into existence, made up of half Moslems, half Hindus, and sliced out of both India and Pakistan. All of these possibilities are dangerous. None of them is as dangerous as allowing things to go on as they are.

The great powers must inspire themselves with the political will to change things and do it soon. Then must also give money, food and equipment on a scale far bigger than anyone has imagined as yet : enough to re-establish the refugees properly in East Pakistan or subsidise them in India.

If they choose to stay, this means hundreds of millions of pounds, channeled probably through United Nations agencies. Unless this happens the luxurious figures round the Grand Hotel swimming-pool will continue to be jittery, neurotic and depressed. The local diplomats and generals will continue to talk apocalyptically and not sleep at night. The million children will die. So will thousands of adults. And the consequences for the hundreds of millions who live in the Indian subcontinent will dwarf even these disasters.





ROMANO CAGNONI gave us the use of this photograph. He was loath to give us others of the medical and horror aspects of suffering. "At least this picture leaves the people with some kind of dignity. Whenever I am in this sort of situation I try not to isolate the person in the photograph." The photograph should, he says, try to show something of the culture, the sense of community that he thinks is captured here.

THE LONG ROAD TO INDIA

There are today over eight million displaced people inside East Pakistan- men, women and children hungry and homeless, 'refugees' in their own country.

Groups of villagers are wandering around looking for India, often going in the wrong direction, in a stunned and vague manner. But there is little doubt that a large proportion of these miserable people will cross the border in the hope of obtaining food and shelter in a refugee camp.

The vast majority left their homes in a blind panic when they heard gunfire or saw the next house or the next village set alight by West Pakistan soldiers as a reprisal for an act of terrorism by the Mukti Fouj-Bangla Desh liberation army.

Some of the women instinctively picked up a few pots and pans or a bag of rice as they rushed into the protective marshland. With luck some of the men had a few coins in their pockets, which were quickly spent. These roaming people keep well away from the main routes frequented by the army. Indeed the sound of an army jeep causes all the able-bodied to dive into the nearest undergrowth. Sometimes the wanderers take possession of an uninhabited village but they are too frightened to appeal to the local authorities for food. They believe with some reason that it is the army that has the real power and requests for help will merely cause the arrest of some of the younger men and women. Owing to floods, a chronic shortage of boats, and the havoc the Mukti Fouj have caused to the railways and roads, these pathetic groups of wanderers are not easy to trace except in those areas where there are Christian missions or European workers. It is difficult to say how many of them die on their way to India but at least, according to some doctors, one fifth. The groups I have seen certainly showed advanced signs of malnutrition. These displaced wanderers urgently need clothes and medical services but it is difficult to know how this can be arranged until they arrive in India except by sending supplies to those few missions still working in East Pakistan and urging the United Nations to put pressure on the Pakistan Government to allow relief workers to distribute food. At present the Pakistan Government have agreed to allow a totally inadequate handful of observers to see that the gift food reaches the right mouths. Food is a political weapon and as it grows more scarce the "good guys" who are members of the peace committees set up by the Pakistan army are likely to feed their political supporters.

The "bad guys" who have not demonstrated in favour of a united Pakistan and are therefore believed to have some sympathy with Bangla Desh can count on rough treatment except in those limited areas where the army has established an efficient civil administration.

Many hundreds of thousands of people are already suffering from the pangs of hunger in their own homes when there is still plenty of

rice in the nearby village market ; but they have no purchasing power owing to the breakdown of economic life. Growers have not been able to sell their jute and men have been 'laid off' work on development projects as a result of the civil war. Again, the impartial distribution of relief is urgent, otherwise hundreds of thousands more miserable people will leave the familiar shelter they have and take the road to India.

The only way to save thousands, perhaps millions, of lives is to begin the relief operation. Famine cannot be avoided when the autumn rice crops have been consumed as the population will eat two million more tons of rice and grain each month than the amount now available. The problem is largely one of transport for at present food stocks are building up at the major ports and there are no trains and far too few vessels and lorries to distribute it. What is urgently needed are powered river boats and trucks with the authority to use them to carry grain to those areas not on the well-known main routes from the capital.

At the moment the Pakistan army has absolute priority and lorry loads of grain can be kept waiting at one of the many ferries for hours. It is only fair to add that every terrorist act of the Mukti Fouj causes additional dislocation and suffering for the Bengalis.

Dramatic measures such as air lifts or air drops of food may be essential in an urgent action to save life when the famine begins towards the end of this year but this is not a realistic manner to feed some fifty to seventy million people.

Unhappily too many families are split and the man who is forced to keep his shop open in Dacca or Chittagong has frequently sent his wife and children off to relations in the country little realizing the greater danger there. Indeed it is estimated that the urban population has been reduced by more than a half.

But this is not a question of figures. I recall in a flooded area only ten miles away from Dacca seeing a queue of half naked people waiting outside a reed hut to obtain clothes and a ticket for a daily rice ration from a Catholic priest, I talked with one woman who had five small hungry children. She told me her husband had been killed earlier in the fighting. Her Basha-reed home-had been suddenly burnt by the Pakistan soldiers. She only had time to pick up the sleeping children before the flames enveloped their home. That was why she had no clothes, nothing. Her story could be repeated thousands of times.

There was no Pakistan Government assistance or help available even though a railway line was functioning within a mile of this spot and had it not been for the priest, the widow and her five children would have died.

Urgent relief is also required by the thirty thousand people who escaped from East Pakistan over the frontier into Burma. No foreign visitors have been allowed to visit them but Burmese doctors told me their plight was appalling.

CLARE HOLLINGWORTH of the Daily Telegraph. There is famine in East Pakistan. 8 million people are homeless refugees in their own land, wandering, looking for India.©



DONALD MCCULLIN

THE PRICE OF DISASTER

It would be wrong to paint a picture of budgetary panic in New Delhi, of an administration near collapse in West Bengal, or of new development programmes cancelled. But, the money being spent by India will at least delay development and the Indian people will eventually pay a price in lives for their aid to the refugees, unless the West—and the Soviet Union—pays now. India to her credit has not tried to pretend that the cost of looking after the refugees from East Bengal has pushed the country to the verge of bankruptcy. If India were to get into serious difficulties directly attributable to the refugees, or was able to point to the actual abandonment of key development projects, it would be a lot easier to get funds.

India has a long history of successfully coping with disasters, even when there seemed all too little room for extra spending, particularly unproductive spending. To put the refugee problem into perspective, the estimated cost for the financial year 1971 to 1972 has now been put at 650 to 700 million dollars. That is, ironically enough, about equal to the amount by which it had been hoped, given luck, to increase development spending in 1971/1972. To use another kind of comparison, the refugee cost is about equal to one third of the 1970-71 military budget.

India's Labour and Rehabilitation Minister, Mr. Khadilkar, said recently that India had to curtail development programmes because of the cost of paying for the refugees. In fact the spending for the refugees has gone on the budget deficit. The curtailment takes a rather more generalized but equally serious form. First of all, the extra funds which central and state finance ministries had hoped to dole out this year to development projects are not now going to be forthcoming.

Secondly, as one official told me: "We're determined not to cut anything. But we are reviewing everything to find economies." On the ground this can mean anything from a cut in the books and stationery budget of a new agricultural school to a slow-down in rural electrification with a concomitant slow-down in the extension of pump-operated irrigation works necessary for the spread of "green revolution" wheat and rice. It can mean cuts in the rural unemployment programme, so that many peasants will not get the jobs. And that not only means that there will be so many less new ditches, roads, or bridges but that the already dreadfully low standards of some rural poor will be further depressed.

Within North-eastern India, the refugees are now on the labour market. That means the depression of local wage rates, and a vast expansion of the already huge ranks of the unemployed, which could be explosive, and, as one West Bengal administrator said: "It's not quantifiable, but as long as these people are here, they represent an extra strain."

The limited number of local administrators have been almost entirely diverted from their normal tasks, and the results of their inevitable

neglect of other matters are bound to show sooner or later. Many have hardly opened their local files for four or five months.

The rich nations have contributed rather less than a third of what will be the 1971-1972 cost of sustaining the refugees. There has been little compensation on the normal aid front. One Indian official put it like this: "Of course we can manage. We always have in the past. But what the West has to think about is what does 'managing' mean? It means a slow-down of all the programmes through which India is trying to create a better future for her people. And time is precious here."

Governments have made contributions in kind—sometimes putting a cash value on them that is to say the least disputable—or they have tied purchase to a particular kind of goods or, worse still, they have tied the money to purchases in their own countries.

This is naturally quite infuriating to the Indians. The burden can be eased by making purchases of the necessary food and materials in India. But the quality of aid is a secondary problem. What matters most is the quantity.

The Indian Government is constrained to act as if the refugees are to be on Indian soil for only a brief period, so this question has not been raised in its sharpest form. Yet even if we assume Bangla Desh independence within the next couple of years—which is going well beyond what India is prepared to talk about—there are many who believe that large numbers of the refugees will never go back. Perhaps fifty percent are landless peasants with absolutely nothing to go back to. The more enterprising are already trying to obtain Indian documentation which will enable them to pose as Indian citizens.

If the costs of the refugee operation could genuinely be regarded as a once and for all expenditure, the wealthy countries might allow themselves, without too bad a conscience, to contribute only a fifth or a quarter. But this is not a problem which will be liquidated by Bangla Desh independence or by a political settlement in East Bengal.

Before the influx of refugees started, many observers felt reasonably sanguine about India's short term economic prospects. Food output has gone up, thanks to the green revolution. National income has been growing by about five percent a year, industrial production has also been creeping up, and foreign exchange reserves are in a reasonably healthy state.

Making India at once more productive, more profitable, and more labour-intensive should be the first aim, India needs to create millions of new jobs. And even in the short term, the diversion of resources by the refugee costs amounts to a dangerous juggling with lives. What has been gained if East Bengali refugee children are kept alive by Indian efforts, when the diversion of resources may well mean, indirectly and over a period of time, the deaths of children elsewhere in India?

MARTIN WOOLLACOTT of the Guardian on India's dilemma. "By helping the refugees now she will have to cut development and pay the price in future deaths of her own children."©

WE HAVE SEEN

‘The life, or death, of Bangla Desh is the single most important issue the world has had to face since the decision to use nuclear weaponry as a means of political blackmail. It is that, because never before have the world’s poor confronted the world’s rich with such a mighty mirror of Man’s Inhumanity.

Usually we in the West, who are the rich, can dismiss or rationalize famine, unexpected disaster and even mass extermination by simply noting that the poor, who are characterized by the people of Bangla Desh, are numerous and ought to be pruned. If only, we say, they could organize their own resources and subscribe to decent, Western politics. Surely they are expendable. We even allow ourselves a good snigger at places crying out against odds we cannot comprehend; places like the Congo and the ravaged republic of the Americas. None has followed the Western wisdom of democracy, and so they must suffer. A pity.

Bangla Desh has called our bluff. The people of what was East Pakistan, who represented the majority of the State of Pakistan, voted to be a democracy and to be led by moderate middleclass Western-styled politicians. Foolishly perhaps, they chose our way in their pursuit of freedom, in spite of problems we have never had to face.

And for this reason alone, they are being exterminated and enslaved in a manner reminiscent of Adolf Hitler, over whom the world went to war. But, of course, he was exterminating Europeans.

We in the West have no intention of going to war over Bangla Desh. Instead, through our elected government, we have contributed what amounts to one week’s survival pocket money to the refugees of Bangla Desh, now petrified in India. India must provide the rest.

It is a cliché but it remains the truth of today : that there will be peace and civilization and “progress” throughout the planet only when the rich minority—us—begin to close the gap between ourselves and the poor majority. We have the opportunity of beginning to do that in Bangla Desh: for this is a cause in which we may locate our lost, twentieth century soul. Oh yes, and save some human lives.’

JOHN PILGER
DAILY MIRROR

“Tens of thousands of children have already died in the refugee camps in the Indian border area. I saw worse malnutrition in these camps than in former Biafra. Several hundred thousand children now urgently need supplementary high protein food. They seem unlikely to receive help in time to save their lives.”

DR. R.C. HICKMAN MRCP
SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND, BENGAL

‘I was overwhelmed. I, who have traveled the disaster spots of the world for many years—I was completely overwhelmed.

A press photographer can usually tell himself that he is doing some good no matter how gruesome the photograph he is taking. But in Bengal this panacea was denied me. I felt completely and utterly inadequate. In fact, whenever I had any free time I went out with the War on Want team helping them to inject people against cholera.’

PETER DUNN
PHOTOGRAPHER, SUNDAY TIMES

“The situation in Bengal is possibly the greatest threat to peace in the world today: it has certainly created the greatest concentration of human misery. The millions of deaths, which are likely to occur in the coming months, both among the 8 million refugees in India and the 70 million people still in East Bengal, are not inevitable. Money and aid, which the rich countries of the world can easily afford, would save lives on an enormous scale: but only the withdrawal of the West Pakistan army will end the murder, terror and oppression and enable normal conditions to be restored. Until world influence is exerted to compel that withdrawal the refugees will not return and war and oppression in Bengal will continue.”

BRUCE DOUGLAS MANN
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

‘The plump nocturnal rats that scampered around the door at Dacca International Hotel looked better fed and healthier than most of the stricken delta people in the first few weeks after the floods.

At that time many of the survivors were clamouring and fighting over supplies that would not have ranked as bargains at a suburban jumble sale. Some relief workers found themselves in the ridiculous position of having to fend off the very people they had come to help. It was a miserable experience for them but emphasized the difference between long term, professional relief work and the massive emotional response the disaster touched off through the world.

There was a lot that was wrong with that first effort. But it saved lives, reduced suffering and brought hope to hundreds of thousands who had been left with only hunger.

There is still room for individual effort. But the scale of the tragedy needs government help. Not faceless bureaucrats distributing public funds but nations offering surplus wealth to prevent a tragedy.

The cost per head amongst the developed countries would be quite small. As one relief worker said to me when we were in the disaster area “Lives are cheap here—you can save them for a few shillings a week”.

It hardly seems worth the trouble of not bothering to help.

ALEX HENDRY
FINANCIAL TIMES

These are the testimonies of people, drawn from many nations, from journalists, relief workers, and Members of Parliament. All are eyewitnesses to the situation in India or Pakistan. With one accord, they plead for action.

We were a group of Norwegians visiting Cooch Behar in the northern part of India to get an impression of the refugee situation. One TV reporter, two cameramen and I, previously a journalist, at present Information Officer in Norwegian Church Relief. Our first impression: too much propaganda. We did not see many refugees, and as a journalist I did not have confidence in the newspapers available. To me it appeared as pure propaganda, all these stories about burning villages, massacres and raping.

When we told people about our opinion they replied: Wait, you will see things yourself at the boundary!

An early morning in May we approached the border to East Pakistan. The sun had just risen, the dew drops were glittering and the landscape was idyllic. Vast green rice fields and small clattering of palms. After a half hour of waiting we saw people coming up the road.

They were refugees—an endless stream of people. We counted five hundred ox-carts and on both sides of the vehicles walked people. Seven or eight men abreast. Young and old. They started to walk faster, raised their hands and started to yell. They appeared to be very eager to tell us of their plight.

The people up in front started running towards us, yelling and pointing in the direction from where they had come. None of us spoke Bengali, but it was not difficult to understand.

The village which they had been forced to leave was burning. An old white-haired man lifted his hands towards heaven and cried out his grief. With gestures he told us that all his eight children had been killed. A finger across the throat told the story. The refugees were so eager to tell their story that they in fact did not discover we did not know the language.

A man caught my arm with a strong grip. He carried a little girl on his arm. He pointed at the girl and I grasped that he wanted to tell me something about the mother of the little girl, his daughter. Something horrible had happened to her—some place inside East Pakistan. Twice he tried to tell me his story. Each time he swallowed and started to open his mouth. And each time he burst into helpless crying. He held my arm and cried out his sorrow.

A woman looked at me without saying a word. Tears trickled down her cheeks. The children got frightened seeing their parents crying so openly and started to shriek out. Several of the grown-ups put up their hands to hide their faces and passed us without saying anything. We were now in the middle of the refugee stream, a tremendous river of people.

On both sides people were passing us with faces wet with tears, on the ox-carts people lay

outstretched, some wounded. A man went by hitting and hitting the oxcart with his bare fist. Others looked ahead with frozen faces, stiffened by sorrow.

I threw a look at the cameraman, and discovered he had trouble in filming. He kept drying his eyes all the time to get rid of the tears. He fought with himself to look into the camera, but his crying intensified. At last he helplessly threw out his hands. He could not take it. The TV reporter from Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation had been talking all the time. I heard him saying: "Something terrible has happened. These people are coming from a burning village. There has been shooting and many people have been killed. They tell us that.... I cannot tell you more. We will make the pictures speak."

And then I discovered he was unable to speak. He also was crying. Then I couldn't take any more. Tears came bursting, and we all left the road and went aside, letting the refugees pass.

Four tough men not being tough at all...

ROLF RANGE
NORWEGIAN CHURCH RELIEF

I visited several refugee camps near Calcutta in June 1971. Despite tremendous efforts by the Governments of India and of West Bengal, conditions were simply terrible. Particularly young children and old people were dying by the score from cholera, malnutrition and diseases connected with food deficiency. Makeshift canvas shelters let through the rain, and thousands lay or slept on damp straw mats and even on the wet ground. They were too weak to move. Those who found shelter in steel and concrete pipes at construction sites considered themselves lucky. At least they were dry.

Conditions seemed worse than during the 1967 famine in Bihar, which I also witnessed, mainly because of the number of East Bengali refugees involved. Hospitals were so overcrowded, patients were accommodated on the floor and in the corridors. Many children and infants were only skin and bones, and obviously dying from dysentery, cholera and malnutrition, and perhaps a combination of different diseases. There was a shortage of doctors and nurses. Refugees waited patiently in line for many hours for their meager daily rations, often in pouring rain.

Since June conditions have worsened in many camps, and unless a concerted global effort is mounted, thousands more will die.

FREDERICK NOSSAL
TORONTO TELEGRAM

"After three prolonged visits to India and to all of the refugee areas. I have the following vivid reactions. The Government of India has been faced with one of the greatest exoduses in history. The refugees are to be found not only in the Calcutta area, but also in Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya. The Government of India has made a magnificent effort against all odds, including the worst monsoon in recent history.

To get the impact of the problem, one could mention that Tripura, which before March of this year had a population of 1,40,000, now has in addition 1,50,000 refugees. It was fortunate indeed that in all the affected areas the Government had buffer stocks in store which they normally have against the monsoon period. Thus from the first day, refugees were able to receive a modest ration. Whilst much of the problem beggars description, it is stimulating to see the local workers and volunteers, sometimes in a sea of mud, continuing the ration distribution and completing the rather flimsy but important shelter arrangements. Medical clinics have also been established. The containment of the cholera epidemic was little short of a miracle.

One of the great problems concerning this particular refugee situation has been that it has changed in magnitude almost everyday, and so far no-one clearly sees the end and how it will be possible for the people to return home. We therefore have merely a massive relief operation without any aspect of solution whatsoever."

THOMAS JAMIESON
UNHCR

For six months we have stood by in shocked surprise and watched disaster grow into catastrophe and hourly nearer to tragedy—and we still stand by and watch. I just cannot understand how rich and powerful nations who interfere so readily with poor ones when they are not wanted, can look straight through them when the want is so desperate—and the time so short. Twenty-four years ago Britain drew that Bengal frontier in blood and pain. Did that let us out politically for ever?

JAMES CAMERON
JOURNALIST

"HOPE? A crowd gathers to watch a group young girls, members of a volunteer corps, perform a stick dance. The 'stage' is a dry open space in a camp—very difficult to find in the heavy monsoon. The 'costumes' are dull and drab and some of the girls are embarrassed because they have no blouse to wear under their saris. But there is strength in their voices as they sing and firmness in their step as they dance and innate grace in every movement they make. They give pleasure to those who watch, and help them to forget for a time the emptiness and weariness of their day to day subsistence.

But for how long can morale be maintained, how long can they be saved from despair and hopelessness?"

THE REVEREND ALAN STEPHENS
METHODIST MISSIONARY

"The horror of Bengal is one of the greatest man-made disasters in this half century. To see the pathetic refugee camps is to marvel that human beings can survive such terrible conditions after many of them had walked over one hundred miles from the insane brutality of the Pakistan army. It is frightful that the world community has done so little to help. The crisis which now threatens is likely to be many times worse than the horrors of the last six months, for with the continuing chaos in East Bengal a famine is coming which could lead to ten million deaths.

The appeals to the President of Pakistan might well have been made to a deaf and blind man. This, however, is no excuse for the world community failing to act. It must act soon."

JOHN STONEHOUSE
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

"It was raining and the man came to me clad only in a worn breech-clout. He begged me to come over to Hut No. 85 to see a woman and four boys. We sloshed through the mud and jumped the ditch surrounding the 'long house', and there was the remnant of a family. Mother was huddled under some old sacking and around her, three boys aged from 4-8 years. In her lap was one about 3 years of age. The children looked exhausted, their eyes shining in fever reddened faces.

I knelt down to take their pulse and feel their foreheads and pat their abdomens. The four boys had typhoid fever and the youngest one nestled against his mother probably would not make it through the night. The others had a chance. Under the sacking I asked mother if she was ill. She said: "I don't know. You feel me and see." I felt her forehead and she had no fever, her abdomen was soft and her pulse not too strong. She was confused mentally, and who would not be? The man was her uncle. Her husband has disappeared at the border—been led off, shot or conscripted as a coolie and never to be heard from again.

Why was she under the sacking? Well, when you come on a trip like this you don't have any spare saris and the youngest boy had soiled her only sari. She had washed it and hung it out to dry.

It was a wet day, and would take a long time to dry. She was under the sacking until she could wear it again. One Canadian dollar would give her a sari.'

DR R. B. McCLURE
EX MODERATOR,
UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

"In June I visited India and Pakistan as one of a delegation of British MP's. We spent one of our days being shown the condition of the refugees in the neighborhood of Calcutta.

One's first impression is of the sheer tragedy of so many helpless and homeless human beings. Then one comes to look beyond the horror, and appreciate the immense additional strain on the financial and administrative resources of the

Government of India.

Where are they to find temporary accommodation in a countryside which is usually wet and low-lying and already intensively farmed?

Where are they to get even the simplest materials to make shelter? How are they to organize rudimentary standards of hygiene and keep disease at bay? How do they make available large quantities of additional food, and having got it, how are they to organize its distribution along few and desperately overcrowded roads?

How do they reconcile the existing population, already crowded enough, to the presence of large extra numbers? How are they to keep the normal administrative machine running as well as coping with the abnormal?

The local administration and the additional officers made available by the Central Government of India are doing wonders, but the fact remains that an unexpected transfer of population on this scale would strain the internal resources of any state, and the world should continue to look with sympathy and generosity at any request for help which the Government of India puts forward."

JAMES RAMSDEN
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

"It is a tragedy, a very, very great tragedy and we like to do what ever we can to help to solve this problem.... It is a tremendous task you have taken up... God's blessing."

TOBIAS IVELAND
DEN NORSKE SANTALMISJON

"I expected the pain and the suffering: as a doctor used to the awful details of disease I knew how to cope with that side of things, even though it was worse than anything I had ever seen before. It is not the quality but the quantity of the problem that is so appalling. For the first time I felt swamped by the magnitude of a situation where I could see no light at all. As a result my sympathies had to be drawn by the rebels, the political agitators. For in the end the solution to the problem must be a political one.

I arrived in India as a new journalist, but, willy nilly, I was drawn into politics while living there.

Why on earth anyone was ever mad enough to expect two such different groups of people as those living in East and West Pakistan to exist happily as one nationality was suddenly beyond me: though I had accepted it without a murmur before.

In a situation the size of this, answers rather than questions are very elusive. But I became sure of one thing. We must not only send money, we must really set our minds to trying to find some long-term solution, and I mean long-term, even at the expense of short-term gain. This might involve a lot of rethinking on our own part and it could be uncomfortable, but we must make the effort; after all, so much of the blame can be laid directly at our door."

DR CHRISTINE PICKARD
WAR ON WANT VOLUNTEER

"I have stood on the frontier between India and Pakistan. I have seen the flood of human suffering at full tide flowing over into the already crowded villages of Bengal. I have seen the camps and the efforts being made there to bring relief.

The enemy is TIME. For God's sake get the world aware of its responsibility to humanity quickly. Only a massive swift magnanimous response can be effective. Delay must mean death to millions of our brethren.

TREVOR HUDDLESTON
BISHOP OF STEPNEY

"Eight million refugees and more coming: then floods rendering areas of West Bengal inaccessible by road for nearly two months: then a typhoon ripping apart the 'homes' of flood victims and evacuees.

I have to walk ahead of a Land-Rover, removing from the middle of the road those few meager possessions salvaged from the flood, because the only dry space for shelter was the road itself. Tubewells were often submerged: floods were the only drinking water, adding further to the death-roll.

Governments abroad may not be able to ease the administrative burden, but at least they can mitigate the effects of the financial load. But even the colossal aid to India which world governments could mobilize can only buy time. It cannot build here, where there is no community to build on. For Government, relief workers and evacuees, the only end can be a political solution which will give security to the evacuees—inside East Bengal.

Both massive increased aid and a solution are vital to India. There is a limit to her endurance."

MATTHEW SALISBURY
UNITED RELIEF SERVICE

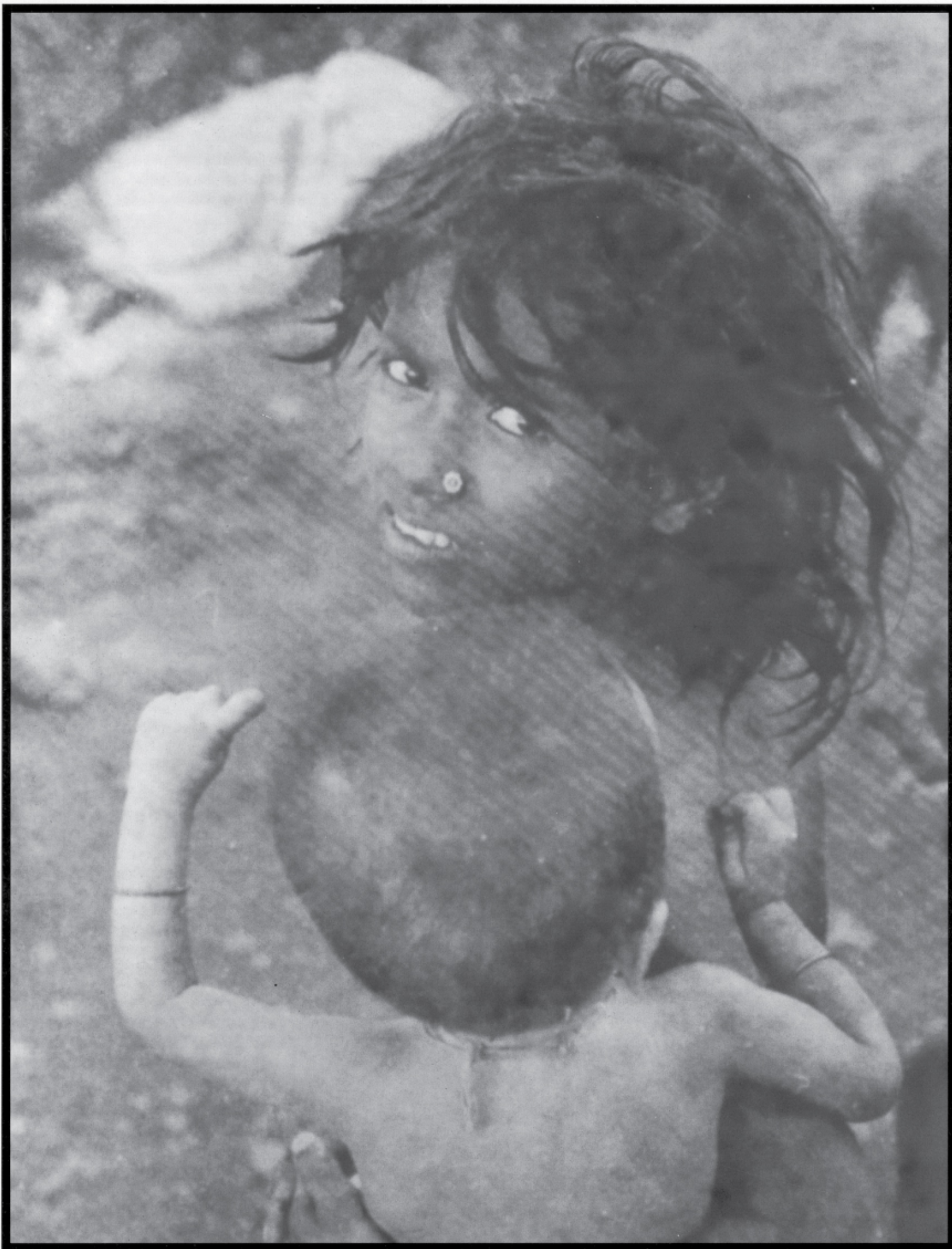
"There are no walls to keep the rain from blowing in, nor any partitions except lines of washing to separate one family from the next. The thatched roof seems to sweat smoke, but just as the smoke drifts out the rain comes in at every pore, and the mud floor which is their bed gets damp and slimy.

Regularly each hut disgorges a hundred refugees or more who form queues for their government rations, queues for the wells, queues for a place at the trench latrines. Those with dysentery seldom make it to the queue. The children form lines for their daily dollop of special nutritious food.

This is the totality of life for nine million refugees—there is no work, there is no money. They knew what they were coming to. They knew, that despite everything, it was better than what they were leaving, for here there is a chance of physical survival.

We shall go on trying to help them survive here. Please do not give up at your end. But above all, please push, press and persuade everyone with influence until the refugees are safe again. Get them out of these monstrous camps."

JULIAN FRANCIS
UNA VOLUNTEER, BIHAR



A man-made disaster of almost unimaginable proportions is unfolding in East Pakistan and in India. Millions are already suffering and millions more are threatened by hunger and famine. And yet the world stands by almost indifferent. Why?

Governments are caught up by the international power game and are fearful that social strife, if not suppressed, may spread. The United Nations is crippled by the attitudes of its member governments and by the existing code of international conduct. Churches feel restrained, fearing that their world-wide interest may be jeopardized if they take actions which are offensive to governments. Even relief agencies dedicated to the relief of human suffering fear to act without governmental consent.

Why? Why do people keep saying "we mustn't get involved in politics"? The answer seems to be that we have an almost instinctive fear of power which makes us hesitate to cry out. Governments feel that they are fellow members of a club and that they must help one another out. Organizations feel that any authority is better than no authority. Whatever the explanations, the fact is that the world stands by and allows the tragedy to grow. Here then is the moment when private organizations and private individuals, if they have courage, must stand up and protest. They must show their outrage that this totally unnecessary tragedy was allowed to happen and is allowed to continue.

But protest is not enough. In a complex power-dominated world it is no longer effective to pass plaintive resolutions or to write isolated letters to editors. Power for good must be effectively and massively organized and courageously advanced. Already the citizens' fight to save the environment, has shown the effectiveness of private protest.

Over Pakistan they must demand an answer to one basic question: Are there limits to the right of a Government to use force against people it claims as its own in order to perpetuate a political system? The question cries out for attention.

It is thought-provoking to realize that in the First World War people were horrified by the sinking of the Lusitania with the loss of a few hundred lives. In the Second World War people were shocked by the bombing of Hiroshima at a cost of 150,000 lives. Today the world is indifferent to a tragedy affecting millions.'

STANLEY BURKE
CANADIAN JOURNALIST

"I have just left one of the innumerable refugee camps which border the Indo-Pakistan frontier. A small camp, it has 6,000 people (Salt Lake camp has 300,000): an 'acceptable' camp. I use this shocking word for nothing is really

'acceptable' in saying that misery is well organized. I saw what the Indian Government is doing to give at least shelter and something to alleviate famine. I saw, too, the efforts made by several foreign and international charities: maybe a ray of hope, but a ray only, because the situation is getting worse. The mass of refugees is growing quickly. Tomorrow, their emotion being over, their conscience being relieved, the rich countries will forget Bengal, whereas it needs help more than ever.

It seems to me obvious that in the face of such a dramatic situation, private and charitable giving is not enough. Only a huge and concerted action by governments can put an end to the tragedy."

VINCENT PHILIPPE
FEUILLE D'AVIS DE LAUSANNE

"It was a Saturday and with the monsoon starting, heavy rain had fallen for nearly five hours. There was a little, almost unofficial camp, not far away from our hospital—perhaps a thousand people huddling in shelters on the roadside or even without shelter at all. In a few large bamboo type huts a number of families had crowded—perhaps 12 families to a hut.

But the huts had been built below flood level and the water had risen in the huts to a depth of about two feet. A crowd stood around one in particular. With the endless rain the roof had given way. Most of the people had got out. But a baby, knocked on to the ground had either drowned or suffocated and its little body was held by a weeping mother. Guilty of nothing, life was suddenly over. I could not look at the parents who had come so far only to find this extra tragedy at the end of a road of tears."

MONSEIGNEUR BRUCE KENT
WAR ON WANT

The biggest tragedy is the meanness of the rich nation "friends" of the refugees. If one creams off the layer of self-interested businessmen and politicians, who have dealt too much with men from the power blocks of the West, whose concern is with money, the people of India and Pakistan are simple and poor—but hospitable and loving. When I first went to India a complete stranger in Delhi offered me his room in his 3 roomed house, fed me and looked after me when I was ill and would not take anything in return. I found the same warmth in East Pakistan and was always greeted with a smile and a ready offer of a cup of tea.

Yet we—Christians!—cannot cough up even half a percent of our annual defense budget to rescue these poor people. Their plight is not their own fault. Ironically it is the fault of men of their own country who have dedicated themselves firstly to pursuing Western inculcated ideas of wealth and power.

KEVIN RAFFERTY
FINANCIAL TIMES

I was in Biafra for six months. I hoped I would never see a tragedy on that scale again. The situation in Bengal in its beginning is worse than Biafra at the end of the war.

ROMANO CAGNONI
PHOTOGRAPHER

"So many marasmic children are seen sucking the breast and looking like wizened old men, that the mothers get used to the idea of having a very thin child and do not become unduly alarmed at the sight. In fact, they would rather leave the child alone than coax him to take any extra rice or dahl if the child refuses to take anything at all—even fluids.

Malnutrition claims a considerable number of lives a day in each camp. To counteract this menace, Operation Lifeline has been inaugurated under the Red Cross umbrella and supported by the Government of India. Each participating voluntary agency retains its own autonomy and identity.

What are the reasons for this acute incidence of marasmus and kwashiorkor? Change of dietary constituents is not the only factor, as the refugees have been living under more severe conditions before coming to Salt Lake camp. In peace time, fish comprised a large part of their diet and now it is unavailable, except for a small quantity which the refugees sell themselves in the local shops they have constructed along the roads into the camps.

Protein deficiency becomes inevitable. Other factors are dysentery, worm infestations, measles, and chest and skin infections which interfere with the child's appetite and cause loss of weight. Once the child has reached the crucial point of being 60% below his normal standard of weight, there is very little hope of recovery by maternal care alone."

DR MEYER
CARITAS

"Considering the sea of mud that surrounds us it is astonishing to find people actually still washing their saris and dhotis and trying to keep their children slightly clean—often in the largest puddle around us or in a small pond some yards away. They do have some sense of the sanitation involved but almost no means of coping with the necessities. From here I look in to some of these tent-like structures, I hear the babies crying. I see people sitting there many of them quite languidly, many of them of course old but still others passing in and out trying to gather water trying to find the children, really almost nothing left for them to do here. They don't know how long they can be here, no-one is able to tell them. They know that they do get rations and they do have some sort of shelter over their heads but from day to day they don't have very much to look forward to."

DOUG ATTWOOD, BOB SWEENEY
CARE

"In the village of Kanthali, a tubby, globe-faced man named Nalini Moham Biswas, welcomed 125 cholera victims into the courtyard of his home when they collapsed while passing through town. Biswas himself was unprotected by a vaccination. Even so, he nursed the stricken refugees so conscientiously that only four died.

But such rare and extraordinary efforts are only pinpoints in a vast tragedy. Narayan Desai, secretary of a national volunteer group, has no doubts about the gravity and explosiveness of the refugee issue: 'I see a series of calamities, beginning with huge health problems. I imagine that thousands will die everyday.'

JOHN SAAR
LIFE MAGAZINE

"When I visited East Bengal I was also appalled by the extraordinary hostility of non-Bengali officials to the local population.

For example, when I talked about the impending famine to a senior agricultural official, he bluntly told me: 'The famine is the result of their acts of sabotage. So let them die. Perhaps then the Bengalis will come to their senses.'

This statement and others have convinced me that food is being used as an instrument of politics.

It is essential that any international relief, to be effective, must be internationally supervised to ensure it reaches the right places, otherwise it will be wasted."

ANTHONY MASCARENHAS
JOURNALIST

"For four months we worked as a medical team serving five camps in North Bengal. Each day we held dispensaries for the sick. We always found a long queue and it was seldom that we were able to reach the end of the queue. It was heartbreaking work as we watched families get smaller as one child after another died, and then came the cholera to take its great toll. Although so much was done and every day there were long queues for rations which were given without fail, conditions were appalling and almost my last glimpse of a camp was of men and women pulling up the bamboos that supported the small tarpaulin which had been 'home', as the flood waters reached the camp and once again they were on the move. It was not difficult to move, they had few possessions."

FLORENCE PRIEST
CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

"It becomes quickly apparent in West Bengal that all government officials, social and relief workers, are totally preoccupied with the refugee 'invasion'. Their fingers are stuck bravely into the dyke and it is incredible that the dyke has not yet burst beyond repair. It is tragic to see how other work, so desperately needed in this part of India, has had to be disrupted. How long, one wonders, will the poor of India stand for it?"

PHILIP JACKSON
OXFAM

"At one crossing point in West Bengal, a slippery track through flooded fields, in mud and pouring rain we counted refugees passing at the rate of 70 a minute in a continuous stream. That is over 30,000 a day from this one point alone, day after day. It is difficult for a western mind to conceive the enormity of these numbers. Many had walked for four or more days. Saddest of all are the old people."

MARILYN SILVERSTONE
MAGNUM

Salt Lake Camp, on the edge of Calcutta, is very convenient for visiting VIPs. It's near the airport and near the Grand Hotel, and they can come and tut-tut before swiftly moving on. It's pitifully different for the refugees, more than a quarter of a million souls—a population as large as Leicester's, living, barely existing, in an area the size of St. James's Park. They are there not because it's convenient, and it's certainly no park. Their's is a life of unrelenting material deprivation, sapping physical hardship and, worse by far of all, moral desolation and hopelessness. And Salt Lake is only one of more than 900 camps for the refugees of East Pakistan. However successfully they may be kept from starving, or dying from the ever-present threats of epidemic or exposure, their fate is so desperate that many of the millions still living quite simply envy the dead. Saddest of all are the children, condemned to lives of endless uncertainties except the certainty of despair. Condemned by the facts of poverty to have weakened stunted bodies and physically shriveled minds. But they are remote and to many of us seem, if not undeserving, at any rate, unappealing objects of our charity or even our concern. Our compassion is not a limitless commodity. Yet, the tormented refugees, their wretched old and bewildered young, are on no island. Not to realize that we in our affluence depend as much on them as they on us is to ignore the realities of the present and future world. It is not only compassion and conscience that cry out for our concern and charity, but simple common sense."

DAVID LOSHAK
DAILY TELEGRAPH

"Back in England three days after my visit to the frontier, the details are already blurring. I see the old grandmother asleep or dying in the station yard, her bony buttocks sticking out of the rag she wore; the mother who collapsed in the camp hospital and the thud as her baby's head hit the floor; the father searching for his lost child in a thickening crowd.

But I have forgotten their faces and the look in their eyes. It is more bearable that way!"

BERNARD LLEWELLYN
OXFAM

"The whole world stands accused of inaction while seven million people are in danger of death. A graveyard of children. This is the scar which is in danger of marking for ever the generation of man which, for the first time, has stepped on the surface of the moon. In an age when an innocent bystander unable to swim can be thrown into prison for not having gone to the rescue of an imprudent swimmer in danger of drowning, in Bengal two million children are dying, killed by hunger, and we remain idle and no sanctions will be imposed on us except maybe—oh so remote—that of guilt.

Why the apathy? How has our civilization reached this height of barbarism?"

CLAUDE AZOULAY
PARIS MATCH

"The people of East Pakistan are the people who do not move easily, whose only survival is to stay where they were born. Nothing has moved them: through the yearly floods and cyclones and then the great cyclone disaster last year they have remained tenaciously on their land so there is something, some great power that is moving them now. That power is fear, the fear of death.

My great concern at the moment apart from danger to India's development programme is that the world will regard these people as expendable. They are not. They must survive, they must not only be helped to survive, but finally they must be allowed to go back to their homes."

JIM HOWARD
OXFAM

"What is so unforgivable about the tragic situation in Bengal is that month after month we have seen it moving towards catastrophe, with hardly anyone lifting a finger to stop it. It is manifestly clear that neither India, burdened with a huge and growing army of refugees, nor Pakistan herself, faced with the prospect of massive famine, can cope without outside support. Yet so far the response to U Thant's appeal for help has been pitifully inadequate. The world community must act now or be prepared to witness a human disaster of unimaginable proportions."

BERNARD BRAINE
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

"Almost total lethargy has overtaken the adult refugees. How long this will last before political agitators start to rouse them to action, even possibly violent action, is anyone's guess. But it is one of the dangers of leaving this problem unsolved."

MARK EDWARDS
KEYSTONE PRESS AGENCY

"Coming back to this country from working in the utter human degradation and suffering of the refugee camps, the thing that hits one is the indifference of people here...their total preoccupation with home affairs."

TIGGER STACK
OXFAM

“Thus far the attitude of governments and people—including us in Canada—to the continuing East Pakistan disaster has been mostly one of indifference. And this is hard to understand. Standing in the rain in one of the hundreds of miserable refugee camps that crowd East Pakistan’s border, it is beyond comprehension. Unprecedented numbers of people are suffering and dying, and the numbers are growing, there is widespread famine, and there is the very real threat of war.

The blame for the catastrophe rightly enough belongs to the men who run the West Pakistan Government. The shame belongs to all of us. Almost from the start, the world community could have stopped it. And it must be stopped now—by whatever manner or means. Our children will inherit enough shame.”

ERNEST HILLEN
WEEKEND MAGAZINE (CANADA)

“I remember one evening walking through a refugee camp in Couch Behar, 700 miles north of Calcutta. Our progress was interrupted several times by sick and dying children who had been laid on mats in our path. I asked the camp’s director, a Norwegian, whether general malnutrition was improving or getting worse. ‘Definitely worse’, he replied.

Within days Oxfam had Indian medical teams working in the area: but there is a limit to what private charities can do. That limit is set by the degree of concern shown by more fortunate people.”

DR TIM LUSTY
VOLUNTEER DOCTOR

“I spent fourteen years in the East as a Tea Planter so I know something about conditions out there. I saw the plight of the East Pakistanis after the Cyclone which hit them last November and the misery and suffering that followed. But nothing I have seen before compares with the tragedy which I witnessed in the Refugee Camps in India recently. Mile after mile, camp after camp, it was the same. Millions of human beings somehow existing in conditions that we in England would not allow our animals to endure. Within two short months, from June to August, I saw the situation deteriorate very badly. The effect, too, on the morale of the refugees was alarming. Not only had they lost their homes and their possessions, they began to lose dignity and feeling. Faced with an inhuman environment, they became withdrawn and apathetic. They appeared to be unmoved by the sight of a dead child lying in the rain, its arm and legs gnawed off by dogs, its eyes pecked out by crows. I could afford my emotion—I would be going home to my pleasant house in the country, my warm comfortable bed. For me it was a nightmare, for them a reality.”

DAVID HART
SCF VOLUNTEER

“Now that the area is flooded, 29 out of 32 camps are under water and it is very sad to see the people crowded on the road, with no proper shelter, just jute canes over their heads.

The Government is trying its best with the help of different organizations, but there is need of much more help in this colossal work, because in Bongaon sub-division there are over 450,000 refugees. And now that the roads are blocked it is difficult for the Government to carry foodstuffs.

After the floods, I expect the medical condition in the camps to be very bad because of the large expanses of stagnant water. The Government will have to do something in the line of disinfecting the areas, giving cholera injections again, because the refugees are going to have a very hard time in the winter, and if diseases start it will make things much worse.”

FATHER D’SOUZA
CATHOLIC CHURCH, BONGOAN

“I found it impossible to shut away the memories of what I saw, in the refugee camps of West Bengal and along the trails leading out of East Pakistan, in that corner of my mind reserved for other horrors I witnessed during wars I covered in Korea, the Congo, Egypt, Vietnam and Biafra. It is not that the brutalization of the people of East Pakistan is worse than what has happened to countless others throughout history. The effect of sword, fire and starvation differ very little in degree on the individual body and spirit.

It is simply that the magnitude of the tragedy is so immense, so overwhelming, it overshadows all other things. The cry for help coming out of India and East Pakistan is echoing all around the world. If we ignore it we are killing our future too.”

JOHN DREWERY
CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

“The Government of India and the voluntary agencies are doing a great deal to house, feed and provide medical care for the evacuees. We can never do enough for this tide of humanity.

The creeping malnutrition among the infants and children in the camps is frightening.”

MONA MOLLERUP
DANISH CHURCH AID

“Imagine the whole population of Scotland trekking south, bag and baggage leaving their country hearth and home with a basket on their heads. Leading their old parents by the hand and ailing children on their heads in continuous streams day after day and finally taking shelter under improvised sheds, only God looking after them. Imagine heavy rains, cholera and deaths on the roadside.

This is the picture. How will England or the world accept the situation?

We want every citizen of the world to come to the aid of these refugees.”

MR J. BANERJI
GOBARDANGA SOCIAL WELFARE SOCIETY

“The situation I saw in the refugee camps in July was the most terrible that I have ever seen—both in its degree of individual suffering and in its size. Since then it has become much worse. In the next few months it will become much worse still. Millions will die unless we act in time.

In West Bengal and the other border states, the local officials and doctors are doing a first-class job. They are working on behalf of the rest of the human family. We should all recognize this and insist that the government of our country, and all countries, take over a fair share of the burden that is falling on India. The impending famine within East Bengal adds a terrible new dimension to the tragedy. We must respond urgently to this threat as well. Time is not on anyone’s side’.

REG PRENTICE
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

“Like an octopus, the problem is clutching the situation from a number of directions.

When approaching a refugee camp the problem that stares at you is that of accommodation. Twenty-three persons living in a tent measuring 12 feet by 9 feet. Sixteen living on a raised 8 feet square platform of bamboo chips, avoiding direct contact with knee-deep water. This is the rule, rather than the exception.

Going a little closer, you see a number of other problems. Thousands of women with just half a piece of cloth to wrap their bodies, thousands of children slowly succumbing to malnutrition, millions dreading the advent of winter winds along with pneumonia.

Moving right among them you realize the more subtle problems: 9 million pairs of hands remaining idle result in frustration: every story of atrocity across the border—thousands of women molested, almost half a million killed—bring with it bitterness, anger and contempt.”

NARAYAN DESAI
GHANDI PEACE FOUNDATION

“It took the bogey of cholera to stir the conscience of the world, but even this killer came and went. It left behind what was there before, suffering and despair—no homes, little or no food, insufficient medical supplies—and worst of all, no hope.”

MICHAEL BLACKMAN
OXFAM

“You know how bright children normally are. Well, some of the children we treated in the camps were just little lifeless bodies, hardly able to move in their mothers’ arms, let alone to smile. The reports of malnutrition have certainly not been exaggerated at all, in spite of the fact that the Indian Government has been doing the most tremendous job. Nevertheless, the need for outside help is essential and is growing all the time, particularly for the children.”

MISS PAT BENNETT
CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

‘They’d been hacked to death with knives and clubs. Twelve bodies. From some of their wounds the blood was still gushing. And when you thought they were dead and finished—they weren’t. They went on twitching, some of these bodies, for several minutes. These are the images that I captured for my first film report from inside East Pakistan during the opening weeks of the war. I shall never be able to wash that scene from my mind, yet able to wash that scene from my mind, yet strangely enough it disturbed and angered me much less than another incident I saw several months later.’

I was watching a young girl dying of starvation. I was held by her eyes. They were accusing me. “You don’t care do you” they were saying. I knelt down beside her and took her hand. I wanted to tell her that we really did care—all those of us the outside world. I opened my mouth to speak. But I couldn’t. I couldn’t tell her something that was untrue.’

ALAN HART
BBC PANORAMA

‘Between 1942 and 1944, there were ten million deaths in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. A quarter of a century later this memory is still in our minds. There are ten million refugees in East Bengal and apart from some news especially in the Anglo-Saxon press, the whole world accepts with complete apathy the slow agony of these human beings whose horizon was limited by the muddy marshes of the Ganges valley. The Indian Government has already withdrawn one billion Swiss francs from its investments to save these ten million living skeletons. Now India is exhausted. Without immediate and continuous international help we will have to resign ourselves to the fact that two million children under eight will die of hunger and cold. They ask for nothing. Their acceptance of a tragic destiny which has made of them our shame must force a reaction from what remains of our conscience. It is not too late, but there isn’t a minute to lose.’

The long lines of bamboo huts flattened by rain become longer every day. In these hovels people sleep on the ground, defecate along the paths and giant crows hover above. Fifty children fight over an egg we had given because we didn’t have the courage to eat it in front of them. In the milk queue a child vomits and collapses. In the mud a woman heaves, groans, and gives birth. The poorest of Norwegian lumberjacks, the most deprived Welsh miner, is a thousand times, ten thousand times richer than the happiest of the ten million refugees. If we can accept the potential death of these ten million refugees it means that we can accept the ten million deaths of Auschwitz. The powers which united to give freedom to the oppressed people in 1944 cannot fail to unite today to save the innocent victims of this tragedy. Their destiny is linked with ours. If we let them die it means our civilization is already dead.

What is needed today is a permanent airlift to take supplies into India, but above all, blankets because it will soon be cold, very cold, and death through cold is as terrible as that through hunger.’

CLAUDE MOSSE
RADIO SUISSE ROMANDE

‘Things do not usually happen just as television reporters want them to happen. So the tragedy of West Bengal is that you only have to get the cameras out of the cases to get the evidence of death, of starvation, of disease and of suffering on record. Imagine Britain from the Highlands to Cornwall with columns of refugees on many of the roads, a refugee camp in most of the villages. That’s what it’s like around the border of East Pakistan. Only two things—thousands of deaths and thousands of pounds worth of money or medical supplies—are in the end going to let us put our cameras back in their cases.’

MICHAEL BRUNSON
ITN NEWS